

Age at Work

Case Study



‘STAY INTERVIEWS’ HELP CAREERS WALES UNDERSTAND AND RETAIN STAFF

With an extremely high retention rate resulting in a large number of employees over 50, Careers Wales reviewed what improvements it could make to engage and retain staff.

About Careers Wales

Careers Wales provides an all-age, inclusive and impartial careers guidance and coaching service to the people of Wales.

With a team of over 570 careers advisers, business engagement advisers and employability coaches, our service starts with supporting young people with important choices and transition points during school years. The Welsh Government funded Working Wales service provides tailored support for adults and young people aged 16-17 with their employability needs and helps them to identify next steps, including further learning, training opportunities, securing employment and redundancy support.

Careers Wales has a remarkably high employee retention rate with a sizeable proportion of long-serving employees. This means that the company’s demographic trend has been towards an older workforce. Analysis has shown that up to one third of the workforce could choose to retire in the next 5-10 years, a potentially high-risk loss of valuable

skills. This has prompted deep thought on how employees can be encouraged to think of work as a viable and fulfilling alternative to retirement.

What Careers Wales did

The Age at Work programme offered a space to look at the needs and wants of Career Wales’ older and longer-serving employees, to help us to retain skills in the organisation. We were able to share ideas and good practice with others looking to do something similar.

‘Stay interviews’ were introduced, as a means of gathering information about why people choose to stay with Careers Wales rather than leave for new roles. A stay interview gives organisations the opportunity to assess what improvements can be made now to avoid further resignations, and they provide a more personal platform than is more usually used, such as exit interviews or engagement/satisfaction surveys.

In-depth interviews also took place with staff at various levels, in different areas of the company and with staff of differing length of service.

The results were encouraging and showed that Careers Wales’ work in helping customers to make informed careers choices is intrinsically satisfying to employees. The stay interviews also helped us to understand the additional aspects of the work environment that employees value, including:

- Promoting and supporting a good life/work balance
- A flexible approach to working
- An understanding of caring responsibilities

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- Wellbeing programmes
- High quality learning and development.

The data gathered from the survey will be used to inform policies and practices going forward in a hybrid workplace and stay interview exercises will be run annually with different employees, to measure impact.

One employee in particular, who joined Career Wales aged 61 and had no former experience in a Careers Adviser role, has been trained in a new role by Career Wales and gained a Level 6 NVQ in Advice and Guidance.

They highlighted that they had gained a rewarding new career at a stage of life where people are traditionally retiring. This is a great example of why it is essential that employers look at over 50s as a valuable recruitment pool at a time when candidate availability is low.

"TAKING A PROACTIVE AND PERSONALISED APPROACH TO ENGAGING AND RETAINING STAFF HAS GIVEN US A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND SHOWN THEM HOW VALUED THEY ARE. WE NOW HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM AT WORK." Denise Currell, Head of People Development, Careers Wales